

HONORING MATTHEW LA PORTE

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 18, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Matthew La Porte of Dumont, New Jersey who was tragically lost during the events at Virginia Tech on Monday, April 16, 2007.

Matt was a sophomore at Virginia Tech and had already made quite a mark on campus. He was awarded an ROTC scholarship, was a member of the Corps of Cadets, played tenor drum in the Corps' Highty Tighties regimental band, and was part of the Air Force Special Operations Preparation Team.

Before he began his education in Blacksburg, Matt graduated third in his class from Carson Long Military Institute in Pennsylvania. Aside from being an avid scholar, Matt was involved in numerous extracurriculars that ranged from drum and bugle corps to the baseball and soccer teams.

At home in New Jersey, Matt worked as a lifeguard at the Cresskill Municipal Pool during the summer and is remembered by neighbors as a polite and humorous young man.

I offer my deepest condolences to his parents, Barbara and Joseph La Porte, and his sister, Priscilla, and assure them that they are being remembered in our thoughts and prayers as we celebrate the impressive life of their son and brother, Matthew La Porte.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE
GREAT CATS CONSERVATION ACT

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 18, 2007

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, today, I am pleased to introduce, along with the distinguished gentleman from Alaska, the former Chairman of the Resources Committee, the Honorable DON YOUNG, the Great Cats Conservation Act of 2007.

This legislation is modeled after the very successful conservation statutes that Congress has enacted to assist highly endangered elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, great apes and marine turtles. It is based on the sound principle that a small amount of U.S. taxpayer assistance to range states can make a huge difference in preventing the extinction of certain landmark species.

Under my bill, a Great Cats Conservation Fund would be established and up to \$5 million per year would be authorized to be appropriated for conservation projects to assist species of cheetahs, jaguars, lions, leopards and Spanish lynx. These species were selected because they are listed as endangered under our federal Endangered Species Act, on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and on the IUCN red list.

There is no question that populations of these wild species of big cats are in serious decline and that their long-term survival is in real jeopardy. For instance, an excellent example of the type of decline these species have suffered can be illustrated in the plight of

the majestic cheetah. At the turn of the 20th century, it was estimated that there were more than 100,000 cheetahs living in 44 African and Asian countries. Today, there are no more than 15,000 cheetahs living in small-pocketed populations in some 20 nations in Africa.

While the reasons for this precipitous decline include loss of habitat, hunting and illegal poaching of cheetahs, this unique species, which is the world's fastest land mammal, has become extinct in more than half of its traditional historic range. Due to the efforts of outstanding international organizations, like the Cheetah Conservation Fund, its slide towards total extinction has been slowed but its future remains very much clouded. The sad reality is that many landowners in countries, like Namibia, consider cheetahs a pest and they kill them to protect their livestock. This philosophy must be changed if the cheetah has any hope of survival. The Great Cats Conservation Fund would make a positive difference in financing projects to work with impacted farmers and ranchers.

Nearly 20 years ago, the Congress demonstrated farsighted international leadership and wisdom when it approved the first ever conservation fund to assist an endangered foreign flagship species. This law, known as the African Elephant Conservation Act of 1988, has been remarkably successful and all of the improvements in making these conservation grants really work have been incorporated within this legislation.

For instance, under the terms of this bill, a prospective grantee would be required to submit a detailed overview of the project, how it would be implemented, how long it would take to complete the project, a demonstration of local support and an indication of whether and how much private matching funds would be forthcoming. The Secretary of the Interior would then carefully review each project and would select those that would have the most impact on conserving endangered big cats. Furthermore, this project would be monitored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, all expenditures would be audited and an advisory group to assist the Secretary may be convened.

As a member of the International Conservation Caucus, it is my view that we have a responsibility to help save keystone species like cheetahs, leopards, lions and jaguars for future generations. In good conscience, how can we watch these species disappear forever without doing anything to assist them.

This legislation will not by itself ensure the long-term survival of these endangered big cat species. Nevertheless, it is a positive step in the right direction, it builds upon the success of a proven program and it again demonstrates to the world that the United States is serious about international wildlife conservation.

It is my hope that many of my colleagues will join with me in this effort by co-sponsoring this legislation and that the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans, of which I proudly serve as the ranking Republican member, will hold a public hearing on the Great Cats Conservation Act.

Madam Speaker, I urge support for this important wildlife conservation legislation.

COMMEMORATING THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE AMERICAN HELLENIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION

SPEECH OF

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2007

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 71, a measure commemorating the 85th Anniversary of the founding of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), a leading voice for the nation's 1.3 million American citizens of Greek ancestry and Philhellenes.

First founded in July of 1922, AHEPA focused on responding to the bigotry and racism that was targeted at Greeks in early 20th century American society. The organization also concentrated on helping Greek immigrants assimilate into society.

Today, the mission of AHEPA has evolved to reflect better times. Now, members of AHEPA concentrate on working to promote Hellenism, education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, and family and individual excellence—all of which are pillars of both the organization and Greek society.

The principles of Hellenism—humanity, freedom, and democracy—have been broadcast around the world. In fact, not surprisingly, they were the principles that America's Founding Fathers looked to for inspiration in forming a new government. In fact, American representative democracy, as we know it, is rooted in the philosophy and ethos of the Greeks.

Greek-Americans, such as myself and 1.3 million others, are fortunate to have the outreach and leadership that AHEPA provides to our community. Thousands of students have had the opportunity to take advantage of AHEPA's scholarship programs. Over the years, countless volunteer hours have been donated to worthwhile projects such as the restoration of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. With chapters across the nation, AHEPA communicates its members' positions to local and Federal legislators to ensure that Greek-American views play a role in not just the history, but also the future, of our Nation.

As a member of the Hellenic Caucus and as a Greek-American, I am proud to support H. Con. Res. 71. AHEPA deserves this recognition on the occasion of its 85th Anniversary for all that the organization has done and all that it will continue to do.

TRIBUTE TO BILL KANE

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 18, 2007

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, I would like to call to your attention the deeds of an outstanding American, Mr. Bill Kane, who will be recognized on April 19, 2007 for his many years of service to organized labor throughout the region.

Bill first became involved in the labor movement in 1967, as a member of the United Auto Workers Local 1612, in Philadelphia, PA while